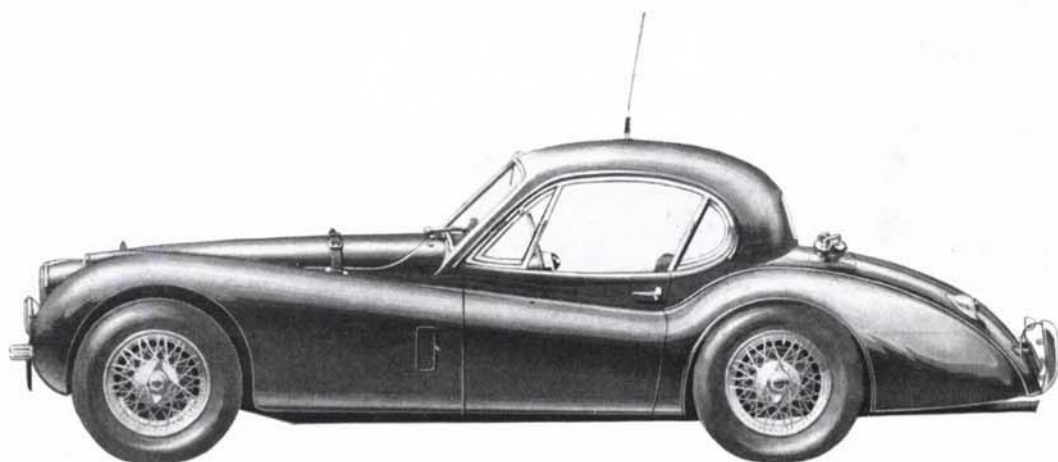


The Jaguar XK Series

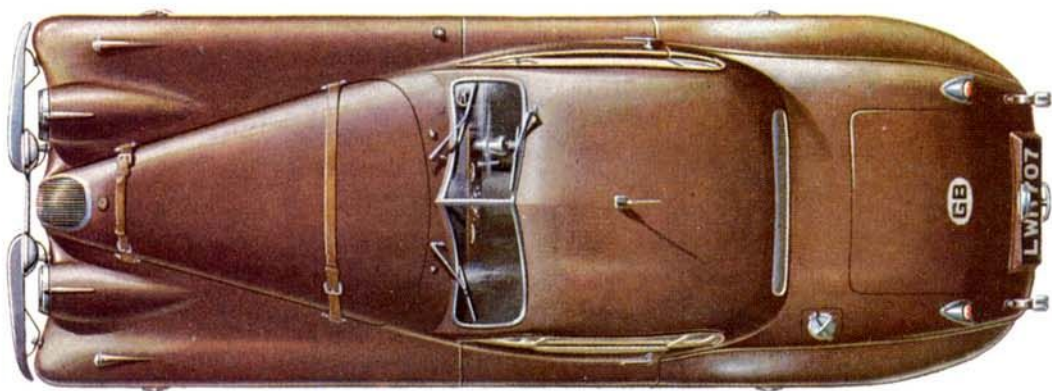


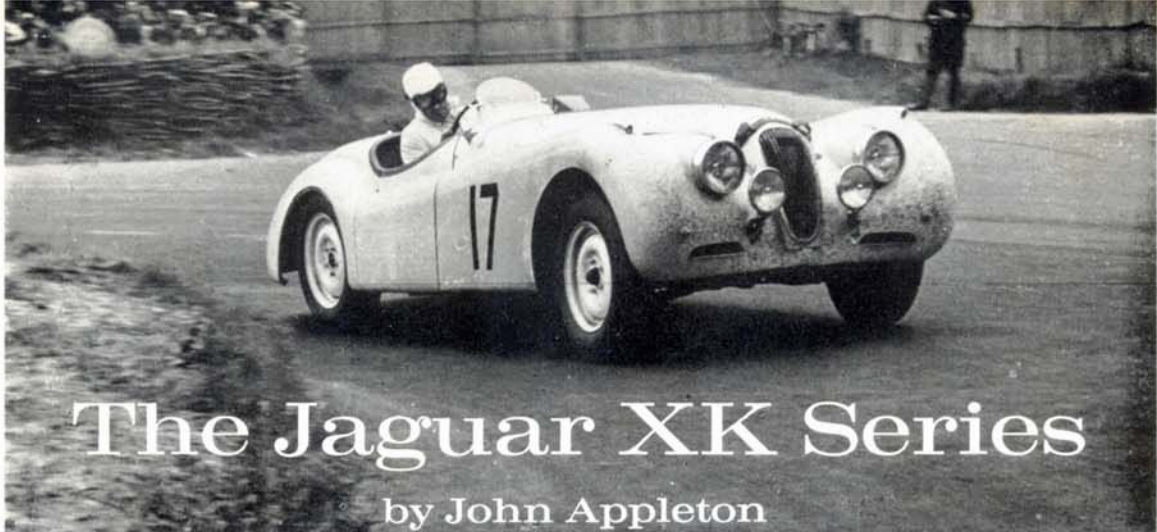
NUMBER 4

TWO SHILLINGS

PROFILE PUBLICATIONS

LESLIE JOHNSON'S XK 120 fixed head coupé which averaged 100.31 m.p.h. for seven days at Linas-Montlhéry in August, 1952. Co-drivers: Stirling Moss, Jack Fairman and Bert Hadley.





The Jaguar XK Series

by John Appleton

Leslie Johnson and his travel-stained XK120 at Le Mans, 1950.

Jaguar's 'XK' series of motor cars was produced from 1948 to 1961, in three basic forms—the XK 120, XK 140, and XK 150—each type being offered in a choice of three body styles. Most famous of them all was, of course, the XK 120 which remained in production until 1954 when it was succeeded by the XK 140; this, in turn, was replaced in 1957 by the XK 150.

The term 'XK' was evolved from the name of an engine. The '120' of XK 120 represented the car's maximum speed, and the figure was in fact a conservative one. Development of the series was not confined to increases in performance, however, and the subsequent '140'/'150' suffix must be regarded purely as the type number, without any special meaning.

In order to set out this brief profile chronologically it is necessary to look back first of all to 1935, when Jaguars were not Jaguars at all, but SSs.

The SS—a *marque* in its own right since 1931—had always been powered by very 'standard Standard' engines. 1935 was the year in which the 'Jaguar' suffix was added, and it was then that the *marque* began to acquire some mechanical individuality of its own. William Lyons, who had founded his 'Swallow' side-car shop in Blackpool back in 1922, was now controlling one of Coventry's major motor manufacturing plants, and decided it was high time that his company should control its own future from the engineering standpoint. One of his first actions, then, was to acquire from Humber the services of William Heynes, and to appoint him chief engineer.

1935 was also the year in which the SS 90—the company's first genuine sports two-seater—was introduced. Apart from a new design of cylinder head undertaken by Harry Weslake, the elegant SS had until then made few pretensions to really high performance, although a team of SS I tourers had won an award in the 1934 International Alpine Trial. In the remaining pre-war years, however, Heynes developed the two-seater (which, in 1936, became the SS Jaguar 100) into a machine that was highly successful both in competitions and on the road. Today the SS Jaguar 100 is regarded as one of the truly classic sports cars. One 3½-litre example was coaxed into producing 160 b.h.p. for short periods using special fuel and an incredible 15 to 1 compression ratio. This b.h.p. figure became the yardstick for Jaguar's post-war engine project.

War brought car production to a standstill, and SS Cars Ltd., in common with its contemporaries, set to work in other directions—mainly on sidecar, trailer and aircraft work. This did not prevent Lyons from looking with customary astuteness to the future. Shortly before hostilities ended the team of Lyons, Heynes, and Claude Baily (chief designer) was further strengthened by the return of Walter Hassan who had been working for several years on Bristol aero engines. By 1945, when the company became Jaguar Cars Ltd., several new engine sketches had already been drawn—mainly, so it is said, during 'fire-watching' at the company's Foleshill, Coventry, factory.

The aim of the Jaguar team was to build a robust,

Leslie Johnson winning at an average speed of 82.19 m.p.h. at Silverstone in 1949—the XK 120's first race and its first victory.
(Photo: Louis Klemantaski)



smooth, flexible engine capable of high power output and continuous development. Designs were code-named 'X'.

Jaguar's first double overhead camshaft engine to reach construction stage was the XF, a four-cylinder of 1,360 c.c. (66.5 × 98 mm.). Its main purpose was to prove the new cylinder head and valve-gear; this it did satisfactorily, but the crankshaft was inadequate for the high revolutions envisaged. The XG, another 'four', was a more conventional pushrod design based on the existing 1½-litre cylinder block originated by Standard, and on the BMW 328 head.

A final basis for the production unit was found in design XJ. This was built both as a four-cylinder (2 litres, 80.5 × 98 mm.) and as a six-cylinder (3.2 litres, 83 × 98 mm.). Most of the important experiments were carried out on the 'four', which consequently underwent many alterations and led to an XK version of similar dimensions. The 3.2-litre XJ would undoubtedly have replaced the then-still-current 2.7- and 3.5-litre pushrod engines but for its inadequate low-speed torque. Its stroke was therefore increased, and thus it became the 3,442 c.c. seven-bearing production six-cylinder XK unit.

Earl's Court, 1948, saw the first appearance of the XK, and public acclaim was immediate. Whilst Heynes and his colleagues had been working on the new engines and chassis, Lyons's flair for 'line', so evident in previous SS and Jaguar designs, had resulted in an inspired body style which in many ways created a revolution in the whole concept of the sporting two-seater.

The enthusiasts who came in droves to the Jaguar stand had, in fact, already been given a hint of what to expect—in terms of power unit at least—when, in the summer of 1948, that indefatigable record-breaker Goldie Gardner had borrowed one of the works' experimental four-cylinder 2-o.h.c. 2-litre engines. Fitted with this unit, Gardner's almost venerable streamlined record car had broken three international Class E records on the Ostend-Brussels *autoroute*. The engine developed 146 b.h.p. at 6,000 r.p.m., with a safe maximum of 6,500 r.p.m.; it had a 12 to 1 compression ratio, and gave the car a two-way average of 176.694 m.p.h. for the 'flying kilometre'.

When the XK 100 was announced at Earl's Court that autumn, its power output rating was 105 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m., with a compression ratio of 7 to 1—a compact and efficient engine working well within its limits. But, although listed by the factory for some time, the XK 100 never actually went into production. The attraction of its larger brother was too great, and



Mr. Lyons (who became Sir William Lyons in 1956) with Tazio Nuvolari at Silverstone, 1950. Nuvolari enjoyed his practice session with the XK 120, but was too ill to drive in the actual race.

the 2-litre, 4-cylinder, 3-bearing XK project was eventually shelved during 1949. The beefy 6-cylinder had won the day; the XK 120 had arrived.

Lack of choice of power unit did not deter would-be XK 120 customers. There were many other reasons why William Lyons's new car should be coveted. Its box-section chassis was orthodox yet immensely rigid. The independent front suspension was by low-stress torsion bars and wide-base wishbones—a result of exhaustive tests combined with Heynes's admiration for Citroën practice. Rear suspension was by semi-elliptic springs. The car had re-circulating ball steering, and its hydraulic brakes operated on 12-in. drums. (These two items were the only chassis features to alter drastically during the life of the XK series—and not without reason, for the original brakes in particular were not really up to the performance of the car when driven hard.) Above all, it was clothed in that beautiful flowing body.

Strange though it may now seem, it was initially intended to construct only 200 XK sports cars, in order that the engine could be tried out by the public as a prelude to being placed in a new saloon car of wider appeal. (This was to be the Mk. VII, introduced late in 1950.) Floods of orders, however, forced Lyons to lay down a full production programme for the XK 120.

The first examples—just over the 200—were fitted with aluminium bodywork mounted on a wooden frame. The new programme changed all this, and arrangements were made with the Pressed Steel Company to provide steel body pressings. This alteration in production planning, together with the inevitable

Stirling Moss drives Tom Wisdom's XK 120 to victory in the 1950 Tourist Trophy, held in pouring rain at Dundrod, N. Ireland.





Bob Berry, now Jaguar's P.R.O., at Pardon hairpin, Prescottt, in his XK 120, early 1950s. The aero screen and metal 'tonneau' cover were amongst the many optional extras. (Photo: T. C. March)

and innumerable problems of launching any brand-new model, created a delay. The first export models were delivered to the United States of America in 1949, but it was not until the following year that a steady flow began—and, even then, home customers were fed in very small helpings.

Public interest in the XK 120 was, nevertheless, maintained without difficulty. Jaguar's chief tester, Ron Sutton, took a car to 'Gardner's strip' on the Belgian motorway near Jabbeke in May 1949 and, with hood and sidescreens in place, averaged 126.448 m.p.h. over the measured mile using low-octane pump fuel. With aero screen, streamlined undershield, and a metal cover over the passenger's seat, a speed of 132.596 m.p.h. was accomplished.

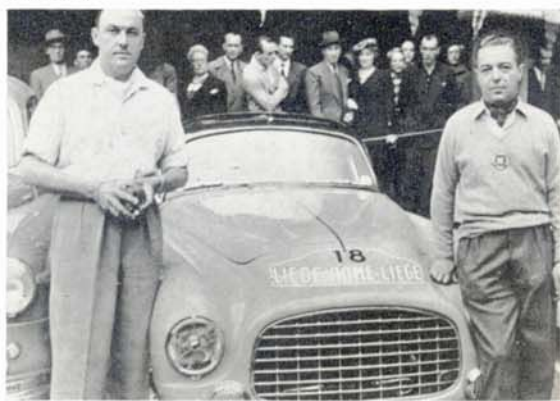
In August three XK 120s, painted red, white, and blue, were entered for the first-ever international Silverstone one-hour production car race. They came home first and second, driven by Leslie Johnson and Peter Walker respectively. 'Bira' spun the other car whilst leading, due to a puncture, and could not regain the circuit.

Jaguar did not set up a competition department until the C-type—Jaguar's first car to be built specifically for racing—was being prepared for the 1951 Le Mans 24-hour race. In any case, the XK 120 was as

much a touring car as a sports car. This was borne out by the luxurious manner in which it was equipped, but belied by its performance which many racing drivers were naturally anxious to exploit. In 1950 and succeeding years the company did in fact prepare a number of production-type cars for competition, and several XK 120 drivers were given works support. For 1950 six drivers were allocated specially-prepared cars differing from the standard specification only in detail. During their 'term of office', however, these aluminium-bodied cars had various modifications carried out upon them. In a sense they were development cars, and the list of optional extras increased rapidly. In summer 1951, for example, performance equipment available to the public included: lightened flywheel, 9 to 1 pistons, high-lift ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) cams, stiffer torsion bars and springs, special brake linings, special clutch, twin exhausts, wire wheels, bucket seats, 24-gallon fuel tank, and other modifications. The cost of completely equipping a car in this fashion was in the region of £160. This was the beginning of the constant development which has been pursued steadily to this day.

The six works-prepared XK 120s of 1950 were allocated to Leslie Johnson, L. H. ('Nick') Haines, Peter Walker, Clemente Biondetti, Ian Appleyard, and

Left: *The Marathon de la Route (or Liège) has only once been won without loss of time, by Johnny Claes and Jacques Ickx of Belgium in 1951, driving the XK 120 seen arriving back in Liège, followed by the XK 120 of Laroche and Radix, who finished fifth. Note the straight-sided windscreen (a feature of the early aluminium-bodied cars) of the winner, compared with the curved-edge type (Laroche's car).* Right: *This Ferrari-like Oblin-bodied XK 120 was second, driven by Herzet and Baudoin. Claes, Herzet and Laroche also took the Team Prize for Jaguar.*





International Rallye du Soleil, 1951—the XK 120's most successful year in competition. The winning car (left), at Cannes was driven by Peignaux, Jaguar's Lyon agent. The other XK 120s were second, third and fourth and sixth; Jaguar Mk.V saloon on the right.

Tom Wisdom. Between them they achieved some outstanding and often unexpected victories. The most important international wins of their first season were gained by Ian Appleyard in the Alpine Rally and by Stirling Moss (driving Wisdom's car) in the Tourist Trophy race.

Ian Appleyard's name was to become linked inseparably with the 'Alpine'. In 1948 he had won a *Coupe des Alpes* and put up Best Performance overall with an SS Jaguar 100 in heroic circumstances, after an epic drive following a delay to assist an injured competitor. His 1950 Alpine sortie brought similar success—Best Performance and a *Coupe* once again—and this was only the beginning.

Tom Wisdom's T.T. entry was driven by Stirling Moss, as Wisdom had fixed himself up with a drive for the Jowett team. It was this race that 'made' Moss. Undeterred by a downpour that set the Dundrod circuit awash, he extended his lead throughout the race and won it with the outward calm that was later to create a World Champion in all but name.

These were by no means the XK's only successes in its first full season. Besides many more victories in Europe, Phil Hill and others were bringing prestige to the *marque* in Jaguar's major money-spinning export country—America. (Hill was, incidentally, probably the first man to convert an XK engine to 3.8 litres.) It is particularly interesting to note, too, that three XK 120s made an exploratory trip to Le Mans, and acquitted themselves quite well. Leslie Johnson and 'Bert' Hadley were actually lying third—

and lapping faster than the leading Talbot—when, after approximately twenty-one hours of racing, the clutch gave up; but the car had travelled in remarkable silence, putting in a lap at nearly 97 m.p.h. before retiring. The other XKs finished 12th (Clark and Haines) and 15th (Whitehead and Marshall).

Jaguar's premises at Foleshill were bursting at the seams and, with the announcement of the Mark VII saloon towards the end of 1950, there began a gradual move to a larger factory several miles away in the Allesley district of Coventry. This transfer was completed in 1952 with little effect on the ever-increasing volume of production.

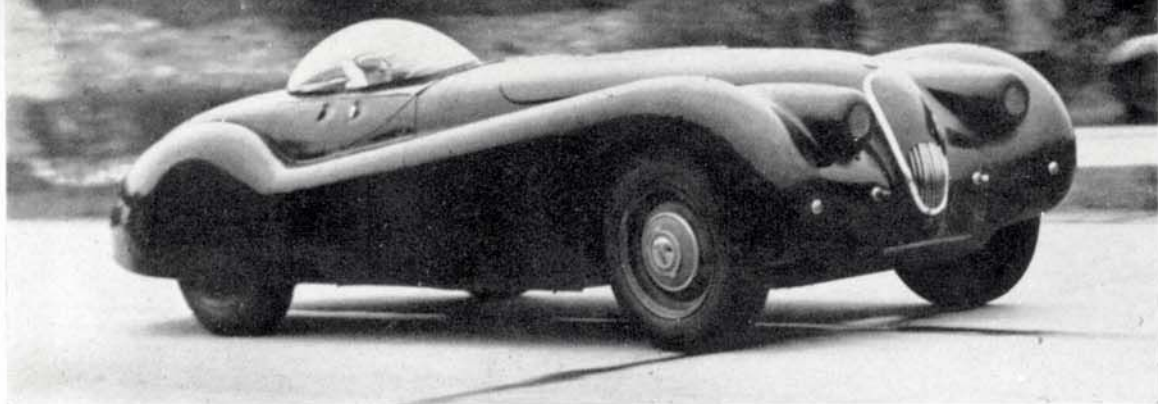
The XK 120 roadster was joined in 1951 by a fixed-head coupé version of equally attractive proportions and similar mechanical specification.

The XK's competition achievements reached their highest pinnacle in 1951. Ian Appleyard put up best performance in the Tulip, R.A.C., and Alpine Rallies;



One of the most successful rally cars of all time, Ian Appleyard's XK 120, leads a similar car during a test forming part of the 1951 R.A.C. Rally, in which Appleyard put up a Best Performance. Later modifications included the fitting of wire wheels, and the car is seen (below) as it is today in the Montagu Motor Museum, wearing the plates from its 1952 Coupe des Alpes—its third in a row.





Fastest speed ever recorded by an XK Jaguar was 172 m.p.h. by Norman Dewis on the Belgian autoroute in 1953.

Johnny Claes scored the only 'clean sheet' ever accomplished in the notoriously tough Liège-Rome-Liège marathon and won the Spa production car race; and Stirling Moss was first at Silverstone. The XK 120's international successes for that year are almost endless. Somewhat naturally, however, such a docile, quiet, and fully road-equipped sports car could not continue to hold off the more specialised opposition with such regularity; and, after all, Jaguar was building and racing full-blown competition cars by now. The future of the XK range was to be its continued refinement and modernisation as *road* transport.

In 1952 a more powerful special equipment version was announced; and in 1953 came a third body style, the drophead coupé.

Whilst development plans went ahead in Coventry, the XK 120 was still performing with great credit, particularly in rallies. Appleyard continued his winning streak in the Alpine by taking home a *Coupe* in 1952, and another in 1953 to bring his total to five. He was, in fact, the first man to win an Alpine Gold Cup for penalty-free drives on three consecutive occasions. (Much-coveted *Coupes des Alpes* were won by XK 120 drivers on eight occasions altogether—Appleyard four times; Habisreutinger, Gatsonides, Gendebien and Mansbridge once each.) In its early days David Murray's *Ecurie Ecosse* team of XK 120s gained victory in innumerable races. Private owners lightened and modified their own XKs, amongst the most successful at different times being Hugh Howorth, Dick Protheroe and Bob Berry, to mention only a few.

It is not possible to mention more than several of the XK 120's achievements here. One particular event which must be recalled, however, is the high-speed

demonstration that took place at Linas-Montlhéry in August 1952. Leslie Johnson had previously used the bumpy, banked French circuit to average 107 m.p.h. for 24 hours (with Stirling Moss) and later to cover over 130 m.p.h. for an hour. Now he returned, not with his familiar white roadster, but with a bronze fixed-head coupé—and with a much bigger goal in view. His goal was to average over 100 m.p.h. for a week and (with a team of co-drivers comprising Moss, Fairman and Hadley) that is exactly what he accomplished—and four World records into the bargain. This more than compensated for the failure of the works C-types to finish, let alone repeat their 1951 win, at Le Mans that year—and Jaguar's sales soared higher than ever.

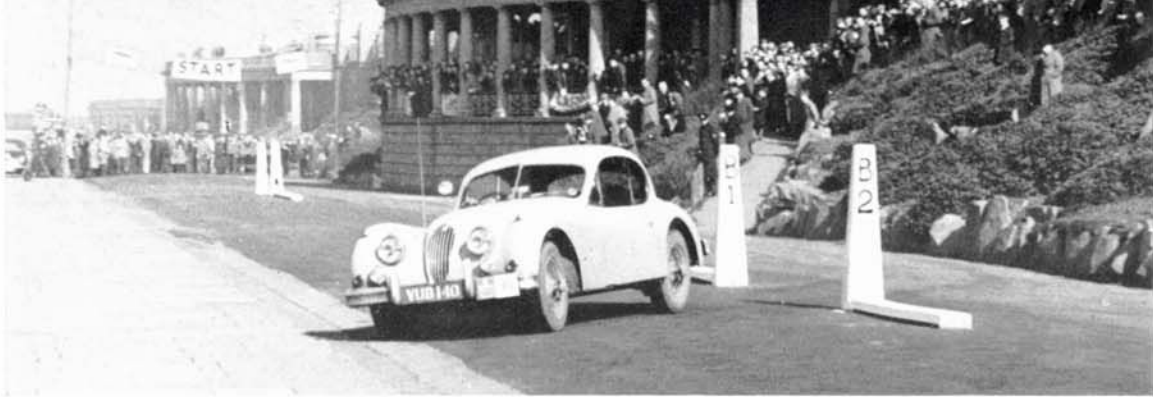
As if proof of the XK 120's performance were needed, Norman Dewis (who had succeeded Ron Sutton as Jaguar's chief test driver) took a modified and stripped roadster to Jabbeke in 1953 and, crouched beneath a perspex 'bubble', covered a mile at a mean 172.412 m.p.h.—the highest speed ever recorded by an XK Jaguar.

The XK 140 was announced in autumn 1954, by which time more than 12,000 XK 120s had been constructed—rather more than had been the original intention! The new car was offered with the same three body alternatives, but whereas the drophead and roadster models were similar in appearance to their predecessor (apart from heftier bumpers and a new grille), the fixed-head coupé had a much larger cockpit with room for extra luggage—even the occasional passenger—behind the seats. The standard engine developed 190 b.h.p. and the special equipment version (with C-type cylinder head) 210 b.h.p.

The car had rack-and-pinion steering, and larger-

Left: Leslie Johnson brings the XK 120 coupé across the line at Linas-Montlhéry after it had averaged over 100 m.p.h. for a week in 1952 (16,851 miles in 168 hours) (Photo: P. A.-Reuter). Right: The XK 120 coupé, perhaps the most beautiful of all the XK models, competing in the 1954 Alpine Rally and driven by Reg Mansbridge.





Ian Appleyard parted with NUB 120 at the end of 1952 and acquired another XK 120 (RUB 120), with which he won his last Coupe des Alpes in 1952. Thereafter he reduced his activities but competed with success from time to time. His XK 140 coupé (VUB 140) during the 1956 R.A.C. Rally, was second overall to the Aston Martin of Lyndon Sims. (Photo: Charles Dunn)

diameter torsion bars of the type fitted to special equipment XK 120s. Overdrive was now listed among the optional extras. Weight distribution was improved by moving the engine further forward, and placing the battery (previously behind the seats) forward of the bulkhead. Although handling and braking were better than before, the XK 140 was very definitely a high-speed touring car. Nevertheless it was raced and rallied with some success by privateers. One of the more interesting versions to be seen around the circuits (long after the model was obsolete, incidentally), was David Hobbs' XK 140 drophead coupé fitted with the efficient Hobbs Mechamatic gearbox; this car went very quickly indeed, proving beyond doubt that automatic transmission—which is now becoming almost commonplace in sports-racing cars—could be adapted successfully for motor-racing. It was the Borg Warner box, however, that became optional on production models late in 1956.

Jaguar's long-term plans had, in 1957, come to a state of major change. The company had just announced its withdrawal from official participation in motor-racing, leaving *Ecurie Ecosse* in Europe and Briggs Cunningham in America to continue to bring home most of the D-type's laurels. Unit construction was 'in', disc brakes were 'in', fully independent suspension was 'in'. We know the result—the E-type. First introduced in 1961, it bears a very close affinity in design to the D-type racing car whose superb stability, reliability and braking power brought three successive Le Mans victories.

It would not be fair to say that the XK series came in like a lion and went out like a lamb. All the same,

it must be stated that its final manifestation represented a point approaching the zenith of this particular basic design. The XK 150 was more refined than ever; interior space was increased still further, and modernised. Like the 120 and 140 before it, it came in three body styles with the option of pressed-steel or wire wheels—although only a few were made with the former. Like all Jaguars, it provided remarkable value for money.

First, in May 1957, came the fixed-head and drop-head coupé models; the open model, the first Jaguar roadster to have wind-up windows, did not appear until early 1958. The trusty, military four-speed gearbox (which was robust but very slow, yet which Jaguar did not improve upon until 1964) was still fitted as standard, with or without overdrive; the Borg Warner fully automatic transmission was also available, as on the later XK 140s. Power ratings remained at 190 and 210 b.h.p., although the latter engine (fitted to most of the XK 150 models built) gave its maximum power at slightly lower r.p.m. than the 'C-head' XK 140. The excellent rack-and-pinion steering was retained, as were the basic suspension design, the separate chassis, and the 'live' rear axle.

Even those who were openly rude about the rather 'podgy' lines, the high scuttle, and some of the XK 150's other now-slightly-dated features, were full of praise for the car's most important new item of specification. After more than five years of racing and of co-operative experiment with Dunlop, Jaguar had at last fitted disc brakes to a production car—and to all four wheels at that. (A standard XK 150 with the old Lockheed two-leading-shoe drum brakes was still offered, but the writer has never seen one.) All Jaguars have featured disc brakes for more than six years now, but in 1957, although overdue, they were still a novelty and the XK 150 got a fine recep-



XK 140 in roadster form. On all XKs the rear wheel spat was omitted when wire wheels were fitted. Note the protective bumpers and the one-piece grille.



Testing . . . the XK 150 drophead coupé at the Motor Industries Research Association's Nuneaton proving ground during tests of the Dunlop disc brakes introduced on production Jaguars in 1957.

tion. In this department, where the XK 120 had been somewhat lacking, the XK 150 excelled.

In 1958, the XK 150 'S' was announced. Initial examples of this 250 b.h.p. model were for export only. The straight-port cylinder head with its three 2-in. SU carburettors was basically the same as that incorporated on today's Mark Ten and E-type. A larger-bore engine (3,781 c.c., 87 × 106 mm.) became available in 1959—the first change in XK dimensions for over ten years. This, like the '3½', was offered in two- or three-carburettor versions—thus creating four engine specifications for the XK series. Both XK 150 'S' models featured lead-bronze bearings, stronger clutch, lightened flywheel, quick-change disc brake pads, and twin fuel pumps.

Performance of the XK 150 'S', whether 3·4 or 3·8 litres, was quite exceptional. Its fade-free braking, predictable handling, and effortlessness at all speeds were fully 'up to the minute'—successfully belying the fact that the basic design was really more than twelve years old. At Geneva in March 1961, however, the inevitable occurred. Once again concepts changed overnight just as they had done at Earl's Court, 1948. The E-type had arrived.

NOTES ON ROAD TESTS

The first major independent road-test of the XK 120 was published by *The Motor* in November 1949. Using one of the aluminium-bodied roadsters, a mean maximum speed of 124·6 m.p.h. was achieved over four half-mile runs in opposite directions. The overall fuel consumption for 174 miles at 'moderately high speeds' worked out at a praiseworthy 19·8 m.p.g. The car accelerated from 0 to 100 m.p.h. in 27·3 seconds and covered the standing ¼-mile in 17·0

seconds. Later, however, *The Autocar* tested one of the first steel-bodied examples which, although only slightly heavier, could not approach *The Motor's* performance and fuel consumption figures. Both journals were full of praise for the car in practically all respects, although *The Motor* did openly criticise the weak head lamps. The two magazines were delighted with the powerful braking, although this was to become something of an Achilles heel when the XK 120 was entered for competitions.

It was a rare pleasure to drive such a car as the XK 120 in the early 1950s. Its exceptional speed and acceleration were way beyond those of most other cars on the road, and at that time its rarity was such as to render the mere driving of the XK 120 a piece of utmost Jonesmanship. Road-testers would therefore include mild warnings in those days, such as: ' . . . it is the driver and the road that are the limiting factors, and not the car.' In that particular test of a 180 b.h.p. fixed head coupé in 1953, *The Autocar* achieved a mean speed of 120·5 m.p.h., but pointed out that traffic on the Jabbeke road had prevented the ultimate speed from being attained.

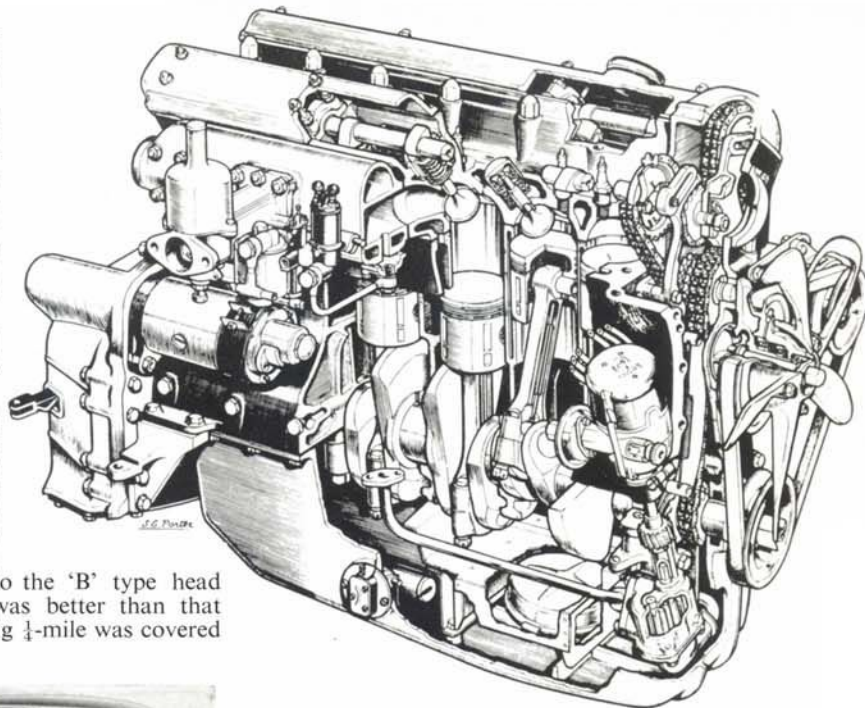
When *The Autocar* tested the special equipment (210 b.h.p.) XK 140 in fixed head form three years later, they went to the Continent again and managed a resounding mean maximum of 129·25 m.p.h. in overdrive. This represented little more than 5,000 r.p.m. and the academic nature of the maximum speed is further indicated by the fact that *Autosport*



Touring . . . note the XK 150's return to a 'slatted' type grille, as opposed to the XK 140's one-piece grille.

tested the same car in this country and could reach only 121.6 m.p.h. *The Motor's* original XK 120 had weighed 25½ cwt. (29 cwt. in test trim), whereas *The Autocar's* XK 140 tipped the scales at 28 cwt. (31 cwt. as tested). The two cars, however, covered the standing ¼-mile in almost identical times. *The Autocar* and *Autosport* both found that the improvements to weight distribution, steering, and suspension had turned the 'XK' into a much more pleasant car to handle.

With the XK 150 came a further increase in weight, and *The Autocar's* fixed-head coupé weighed 32½ cwt. as tested. With the same overdrive ratio (3.19) as the XK 140, its mean average speed was 123.7 m.p.h. Acceleration, however (probably due to the 'B' type head replacing the 'C' type head) was better than that of the XK 140, and the standing ¼-mile was covered in 16.9 seconds.



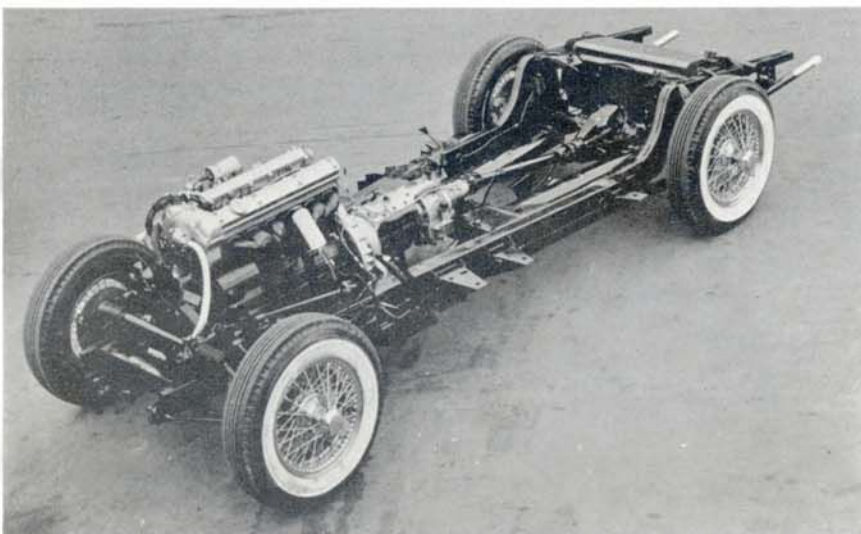
The 3½-litre, twin overhead camshaft Jaguar XK 120 engine. (Motor drawing)



Few bodybuilders attempted to emulate the 'Lyons Line'. A successful design, however, was this one-off XK 150 by Bertone which did not try to be anything other than typically Italian—although there is a 'Jaguar air' about the radiator grille, and the wheels and headlamps look familiar.

The Autocar, *The Motor* and *Autosport* all tested the same 3.4-litre 250 b.h.p. XK 150 'S' coupé soon after it was announced. Its straight-port head with three 2-in. carburettors brought its performance well beyond that of any previous 'XK'. Obtaining representative road test figures had by now become a more specialised occupation, and the comparison between the three journals' figures is noteworthy. For example:

| | <i>The Autocar</i> | <i>The Motor</i> | <i>Autosport</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Overall m.p.g. | 17.0 | 18.6 | 18.0 |
| Maximum m.p.h. | 134.0 | 132.0 | 132.3 |
| 0-100 m.p.h. (seconds) | 22.4 | 20.3 | 20.0 |
| Standing ¼-mile (seconds) | 16.2 | 16.2 | 15.8 |



Surely the best 'XK' performance ever recorded by a motoring paper was *Autosport's* 136.3 m.p.h. from a 3.8-litre 265 b.h.p. XK 150 'S' in 1960. The 0 to 100 figure of 19 seconds is not so very far short of today's E-type times!

© John Appleton, 1966.

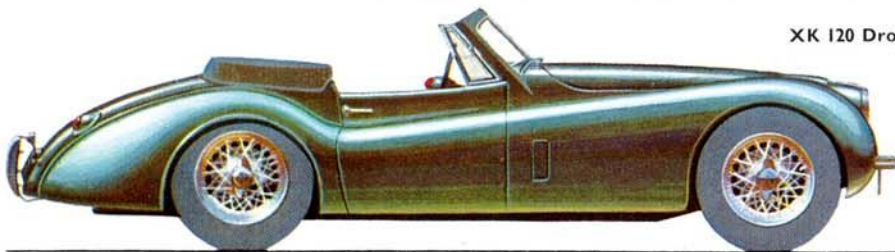
Illustrations not acknowledged are reproduced by courtesy of Jaguar Cars Ltd.

Robust: the XK 150 overdrive model chassis.

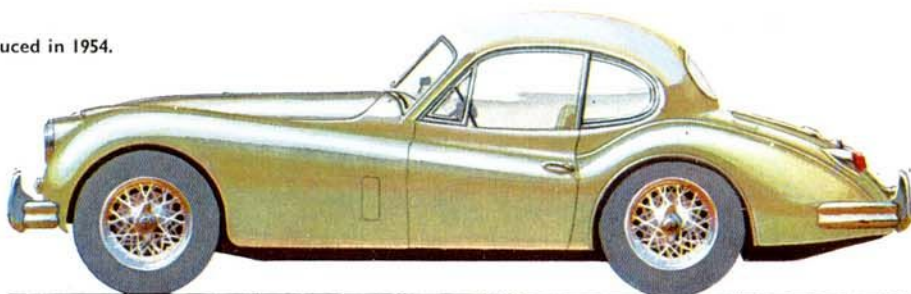
XK 120 Roadster, introduced in 1948.



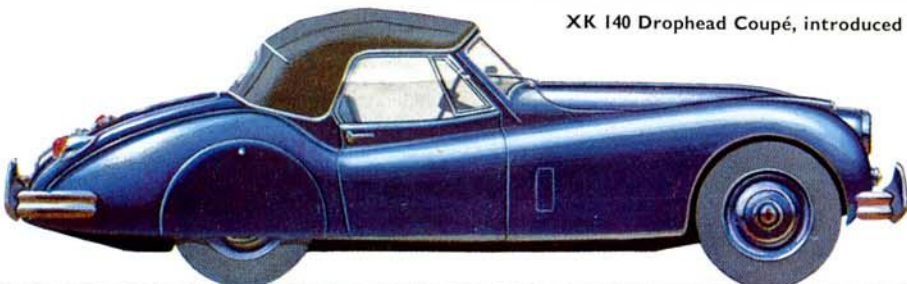
XK 120 Drophead Coupé, introduced in 1953.



XK 140 Fixed-head Coupé, introduced in 1954.

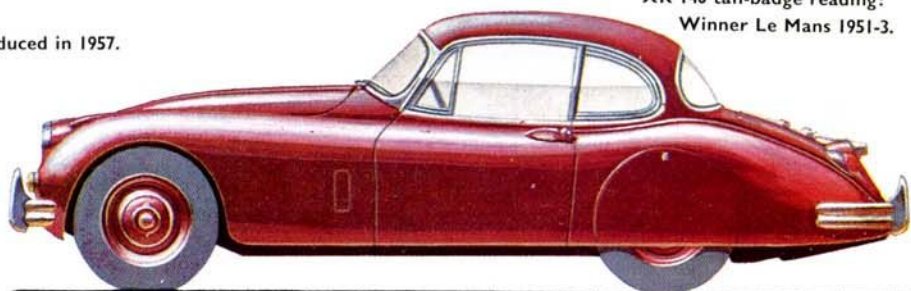


XK 140 Drophead Coupé, introduced in 1954.

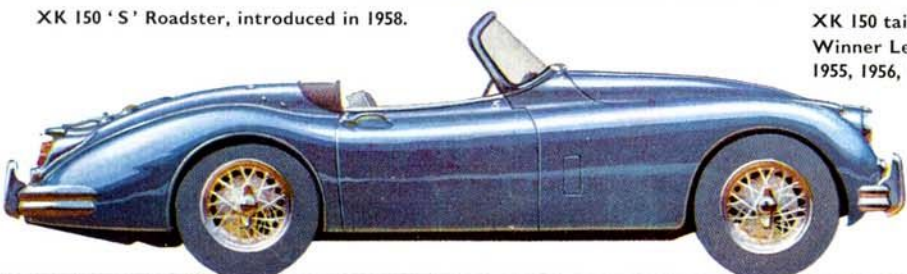


XK 140 tail-badge reading:
Winner Le Mans 1951-3.

XK 150 Fixed-head Coupé, introduced in 1957.

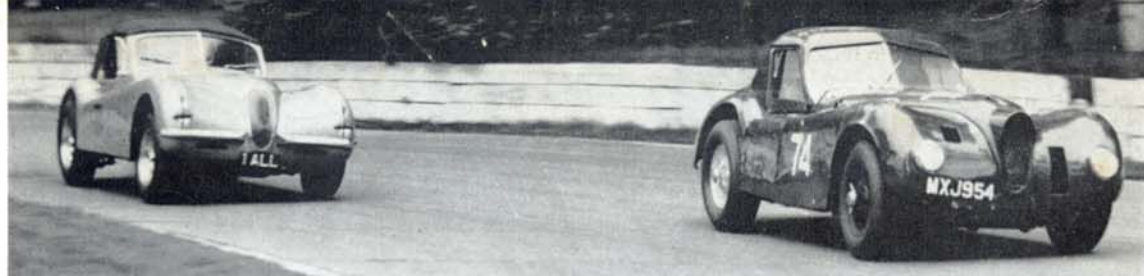


XK 150 'S' Roadster, introduced in 1958.



XK 150 tail-badge reading:
Winner Le Mans 1951-3,
1955, 1956, 1957.





XKs are travelling faster today than ever. Leading this duel at the 1964 National Jaguar Club Crystal Palace meeting is Robin Beck's immensely powerful 3.8-litre XK 120 'Special', which develops 290 b.h.p. Following, with Jackie Stewart at the wheel, is Eric Brown's XK 120 drophead which is very 'D-type' in its mechanical make-up. Note re-positioned headlamps of both cars.

The XK 150 roadster introduced at the 1958 New York Show. Note the one-piece windscreen and wind-up windows. (XK 150S models were identified externally by a small 'S' motif on the door.)

BRIEF SPECIFICATION COVERING THE WHOLE XK SERIES

ENGINE: Six cylinder Jaguar XK engine; 70° twin overhead camshafts driven by two-stage roller chain; high-tensile aluminium alloy cylinder head with hemispherical combustion chambers; chrome-iron cylinder block; aluminium alloy pistons; steel connecting rods; 2½ in. diameter counterweighted crankshaft carried on seven large steel-backed bearings; forced lubrication by submerged pump with full-flow filter.

CHASSIS: Straight plane steel box-section frame of great strength; torsional rigidity ensured by large box-section cross-members; independent front suspension incorporating transverse wishbones and torsion bars controlled by telescopic dampers; rear suspension by long silico-manganese steel semi-elliptic springs controlled by telescopic dampers (piston-type rear dampers on XK 120).

ELECTRICAL: Lucas 12 volt system; 64 amp.-hours at 10-hour rate with current voltage control; ventilated dynamo.

TRANSMISSION: Borg and Beck 10 in. s.d.p. clutch. Synchromesh single helical gearbox four speeds and reverse. Laycock de Normanville overdrive standard on XK 150 'S', and optional on XK 140 and XK 150. Borg Warner fully automatic transmission optional on late XK 140 and all XK 150 models except the XK 150 'S'. Hardy Spicer open propeller shaft. Hypoid bevel final drive.

BRAKES: Lockheed 12-in. diameter drums on XK 120 and XK 140 (friction lining area = 208 sq. in.). Dunlop 12-in. diameter discs on XK 150 (rubbed area = 540 sq. in.).

STEERING: Burman recirculating ball on XK 120. Alfrod and Alder rack-and-pinion on XK 140 and XK 150.

WHEELS: 6.00 x 16 pressed steel or wire. (Wire wheels only on XK 150 'S'.)

FUEL CAPACITY: 14 gallons.



INTRODUCTION OF MODELS

| Year | Model | Body Type | Engine |
|------|------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1948 | XK 120 | Open two-seater | 3.4 litre |
| 1951 | XK 120 | Fixed-head coupé | 3.4 litre |
| 1953 | XK 120 | Drophead coupé | 3.4 litre |
| 1954 | XK 140 | All three styles | 3.4 litre |
| 1957 | XK 150 | Fixed and drophead | 3.4 litre |
| 1958 | XK 150 | Open two-seater | 3.4 litre |
| 1958 | XK 150 'S' | All three styles | 3.4 litre |
| 1959 | XK 150 | All three styles | 3.8 litre |
| 1959 | XK 150 'S' | All three styles | 3.8 litre |

Principal Dimensions

| | XK 120 | XK 140 | XK 150 |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Wheelbase | 8' 6" | 8' 6" | 8' 6" |
| Track—front | 4' 3" | 4' 3½" | 4' 3½" |
| Track—rear | 4' 2" | 4' 2½" | 4' 3½" |
| Length | 14' 5" | 14' 8" | 14' 9" |
| Width | 5' 1½" | 5' 4½" | 5' 4½" |

XK SERIES Production Engine Specifications

| | XK 120 | | | XK 140 | | XK 150 | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|
| | Standard Models | | Standard with Modifications | Special Equipment * | Standard | Special Equipment * | Special Equipment | | 'S' Models | | |
| c.c. | 3,442 | | 3,442 | 3,442 | 3,442 | 3,442 | 3,781 | 3,442 | 3,781 | | |
| Bore | 83 mm. | | 83 mm. | 83 mm. | 83 mm. | 83 mm. | 87 mm. | 83 mm. | 87 mm. | | |
| Stroke | 106 mm. | | 106 mm. | 106 mm. | 106 mm. | 106 mm. | 106 mm. | 106 mm. | | | |
| Carbs. (S.U.) | 2 x 1½" | | 2 x 1½" | 2 x 1½" | 2 x 1½" | 2 x 1½" | 2 x 1½" | 3 x 2" | | | |
| C.R. | 7 : 1 | 8 : 1 | 8 : 1 | 9 : 1 | 8 : 1 | 8 : 1 | 8 : 1 | 8 : 1 | 9 : 1 | 9 : 1 | |
| B.H.P. | 150 | 160 | 180 | 190 | 180 | 190 | 210 | 210 | 220 | 250 | 265 |
| (at) R.P.M. | 5,000 | 5,200 | 5,300 | 5,400 | 5,750 | 5,500 | 5,750 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,500 |
| Year | 1948/9 | | 1951 | 1952 | 1954 | 1954 | 1957 | 1959 | 1958 | 1959 | |

* The Special Equipment XK 120 was known as the 'XK 120 M' in America. Similarly, the Special Equipment XK 140 was known as the 'XK 140 MC'.